Thomas A. Edison Papers Digital Edition

Edison-Miller Family Records

Family Records Series, Part V

[F5D03-F] Edison, William L. and Blanche Travers (1912-1930)

Family Records Series -- Charles Edison Fund Collection -- Edison-Miller Family Papers

Title
[F5D03-F] Edison, William L. and Blanche Travers (1912-1930)

Description
The selected items in this folder cover the years 1912-1930. They consist primarily of letters from William L. Edison to his stepmother Mina Miller Edison. Included are references to William's business career, his involvement in World War I, and his troubled relationship with his family. There is also an undated letter by Blanche, probably from 1930 or 1931, regarding a visit with the Edison family and their guests, including Harvey Firestone.

URL

https://edisondigital.rutgers.edu/folder/F5D03-F

Identifier

F5D03-F

Type

Family Records

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Family Records Series -- Charles Edison Fund Collection -- Edison-Miller Family Papers

Alternative Title

Edison, William L. and Blanche Travers (1912-1930)

Has Version

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[F5D03A], Letter from William Leslie Edison to Mina Miller (Mrs Thomas A.) Edison, December 16th, 1912

Title
[F5D03A], Letter from William Leslie Edison to Mina Miller (Mrs Thomas A.) Edison, December 16th, 1912

Author
Edison, William Leslie

Recipient
Edison, Mina Miller (Mrs Thomas A.)

Mentioned

- Edison, Madeleine
- Edison, Blanche Travers (Mrs William L.)

Date
1912-12-16

Type
Letter

Subject

- Edison-Miller family
- Social customs, norms, values
- Agriculture

Folder ID
F5D03-F

Microfilm ID
284:649

Document ID
F5D03A

URL
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Timestamp
16 December 1912

Has Version
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Salisbury Md.
Dec 16th 1912.

My dear Mother -:

On Wednesday, I am shipping to you, one of our milk fed turkeys which I hope you all will enjoy. While these turkeys are not of the very large breed, it will weigh in the neighborhood of sixteen pounds. The meat is more tender that our large stock, some we killed today weighing over thirty pounds.

Blanche raised over a hundred this year and she is more than delighted as she has her eye on a dining room suite that she has been working for, the past year and I guess she will get it from all indications.

We are disposing of our entire lot of fowl this fall as we are moving to Phila, this spring where I have several positions offered to me. I would gladly send you a brace of wild duck but the laws here forbid shipping out of state.

Trusting that you all are enjoying the best of health and that you will tell Madeleine that I wish her every happiness in the world, I wish you all a merry Xmas and a Happy-New years.

Lovingly
William.

12-6573

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[F5D03b], Letter from William Leslie Edison to Mina Miller (Mrs Thomas A.) Edison, March 1916

Title
[F5D03b], Letter from William Leslie Edison to Mina Miller (Mrs Thomas A.) Edison, March 1916

Editor's Notes
Supplied year and month

Author
Edison, William Leslie

Recipient
Edison, Mina Miller (Mrs Thomas A.)

Mentioned

- Sloane, Thomas Edison
- Edison, Madeleine
- Edison, Blanche Travers (Mrs William L.)
- Sloane, John Eyre

Date
1916-03-00

Type
Letter

Subject

- Edison-Miller family
- Property
- Health and medicine

Folder ID
F5D03-F

Microfilm ID
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Document ID
F5D03b

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Timestamp
1 March 1916

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TELEPHONE 1223-M MORRISTOWN

WILLIAM L. EDISON
MORRISTOWN, N. J.

AUTO ACCESSORIES
MANUFACTURERS' AGENT
TO THE TRADE ONLY

My Dear Mother;

Wee Gates!I suppose you are having a fine time and the weather must be simply perfect.

At last winter has received a poke in the slats and the long waited for spring is with us,yours truly being so thankful that he cant stay in the house long enough to sleep.

The roads however are impassible and even the mail wagon has to have four horses to pull him through the bad spots. Some place this.

We are leaving this place this summer moving nearer to Morristown and in a moreup to date house,as this place is rapidly going to the dogs,the beams and all the underpinning being decayed. In fact carpenters who have looked the place over say that it will fall in,within two years.

Week after week,this winter the roads were so blocked that we could not leave the place and this is certainly no place for a white man to live. Of course we did not know all circumstances about the place when we first moved in,but suffice to say that not a single house has been built or a piece of ground sold on this road for the past thirty five years. This alone will show you that it is a popular location. A few of the Old Morristonian families who settled here years ago are with us but I am of the opinion that they remain for the reason they cant sell out and move.

I have just received notification of my election to the Whippany River Club,one of the Most exclusive clubs in Morristown and in the state.

I am very fond of the Morristonians and we have made lots of friends

12-6602

TELEPHONE 1223-M MORRISTOWN

WILLIAM L. EDISON
MORRISTOWN, N. J.

AUTO ACCESSORIES
MANUFACTURERS' AGENT
TO THE TRADE ONLY

The best people here and I would not be tempted to leave for any cause.

Blanche of course likes it well as she is interested in her St.Peters Church and her work in the "Trenches" is exceedingly interesting.

You must certainly run up and see us shortly after you return and before we move as it is rather embassassing to keep on trying to make excuses for your not coming to see us and do you realize that we are only nineteen miles from your house and but an hours run from there,yet in the three years we have been here you have never been to our home. One might as well try to stop the earth as to stop people from gossiping and at times it seems rather hard trying to explain a condition that does not exist.

There may be a reason but if there is I am entirely in the dark as to what it can be. Of course I appreciate the fact that as far as family is conserned,I am practically an outside member and this fact was driven in when I telephoned the house and John Sloane answered. I asked if we could see Madeleine and his reply was "Come down in a week as only the IMMEDIATE FAMILY have been allowed to see her." So that let me out then and there. Couldnt be much plainer,could it?.

Affectionately,

William

Sunday.

12-6602

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[F5D03c], Letter from William Leslie Edison to Mina Miller (Mrs Thomas A.) Edison, November 1917

Title
[F5D03c], Letter from William Leslie Edison to Mina Miller (Mrs Thomas A.) Edison, November 1917

Editor's Notes
Supplied year and month

Author
Edison, William Leslie

Recipient
Edison, Mina Miller (Mrs Thomas A.)

Mentioned

- Edison, Madeleine
- Edison, Blanche Travers (Mrs William L.)
- Sloane, John Eyre

Date
1917-11-00

Type
Letter

Subject

- Edison-Miller family
- State and local government
- Reforms
- Labor
- Agriculture
- Health and medicine
- Submarines and submarine warfare

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Timestamp
1 November 1917

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Dear Mother -:

Many thanks for your letter which came on my birthday. I would have answered sooner but my entire time has been taken up in getting rid of a badly bruised leg. In trying out a new Caterpillar tractor, I lost control. She stood righ up on her hind legs, so to speak and then flopped over. I also flopped over at the same time and six thousand pounds of iron landed with a sickening thud just two inches away from my face. My leg was caught under the seat and X-ray shows that no bones were broken but several ligiments were put out of commission. I am able to walk a little but unless water on the knee develops, I will give her another trial, but I will try and keep her from doing any more aerial stunts. I know how tiresome is this matter of hanging around a boat day & night and I guess you both will be glad when the bugle blows "quit."

John + Madeleine will like Washington I am sure. I spent several delightful years there and made many good friend, many which I retain, for I see them from time to time

I have just been elected to membership of the Aerial league, Defence League and several others Why!? I dont know, but probably due to the fact that I look as though I could put up a good fight when called upon.

12-6601

just at present however, I am more interested with my duties in connection with the State Farm Service League. and other leagues regarding the welfare of the farmer and food conservation. I have also been requested to serve on the State Hoover Committee but this will take much of my time and I cannot give up much time on account of having to be a wet nurse to a bunch of lazy, good for nothing tractor drivers.

If I dont get better help in the future, I will go at get a job as star gazer at the "bug house" at Morris Plains. This locality is just fine. Bug house and the poor house right at your back door. Take your choice. This help question has my goat. Some weeks ago I got so mad at one of my men that I grabbed him by the neck, pulled him off the tractor and gave him a few jabs in the face for good luck.

He was so drunk he was going round and round the field without even putting the plows in the ground. When I got through with him, he ran for Morristown like a scared cat and I have never laid eyes on him since.

For two weeks his work was excellent, then slowed up until the fatal day. This is the kind of trouble I am up against. What make me mad, is the facts that I have thousands of dollars worth of work on hand and no help that can do it. But I am going to get there and work this thing out if I've got to stand on

my game leg and wait ten years to do it.

Our house is all being done over. The outside is to have old Colonial shingles put on and the interior is being remodeled and re-decorated. It certainly is going to be a very attractive place, in fact one of the most attractive small places around Morristown.

Blanche has just passed examinations for the Red Cross nursing and has been appointed Captain on one of the Liberty Loan Committees and with her work at the "French" she has about all she can handle. With love to you both and with hope that your "yachtit" affair will be over soon. I am, as always.

Lovingly

Sunday. William

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[F5D03D], Letter from William Leslie Edison to Mina Miller (Mrs Thomas A.) Edison, January 1918

Title
[F5D03D], Letter from William Leslie Edison to Mina Miller (Mrs Thomas A.) Edison, January 1918

Editor's Notes
Supplied year and month

Author
Edison, William Leslie

Recipient
Edison, Mina Miller (Mrs Thomas A.)

Mentioned

- Packard, Ralph Gooding
- Edison, Blanche Travers (Mrs William L.)

Date
1918-01-00

Type
Letter

Subject

- Edison-Miller family
- World War I
- Health and medicine
- Military

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1 January 1918

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Dale
Wm. Gilliam
Edison

My dear Mother -:

A Happy New year to you all. We were very sorry not to have been able to come down Xmas as I know you all had a very enjoyable time. We are taking Blanche to Newark tomorrow in a closed car and thence via Penna R.R. to her sisters home outside of Wilmington. She has been a pretty sick woman for many weeks and today has been the first that the doctors would allow her to be moved. She will be better situated at her sisters home as they are very well to do and the entire Manley family are very fond of Blanche and nothing is too good for her.

They even wanted to send a private auto ambulance all the way from Phila or Wilmington. We vetoed this on account of the road conditions. Mr Packard, the owner of the house we occupy, is making extensive alterations to the house and grounds and we are very happy in the thought that by next summer we will have one of the prettiest small homes around Morristown. He is putting about ten thousand dollars worth of improvements. Quite a tidy sum in these times. I am the boss here, so I will return after Blanche gets off at Newark. as the old saying is true, "when the cats away the mice will play"

I designed all the improvements and must see that they are carried out properly. We have as many as seventeen men working at a time but this weather has caused most of the men to have cold feet and quit. Two nights ago the thermometer stood at 20 degrees below zero and never batted an eye until ten in the morning when it went to 14. I have a lot of wood land and about two hundred cords of wood cut and ready for delivery but no way to get it to town. Nobody will work, too cold

12-6603

There is a lot of suffering in Morristown, water mains frozen and the gas has given out. On top of that, there is mighty little coal. I dont know what this world is coming to: On top of it all I have had a feeler from the War Dept. in regards to taking charge of a Tractor Unit and repair shop. "Overthere". I have answered, that if the country needs me., By all means I am ready to go, anywhere and any time.

I have come to the conclusion, that the time has arrived, when the best thing to do is to throw away your night shirt and sleep in your clothes.

The Old little U.S.A. will get us all sooner or later so there is no use trying to dodge the inevitable but to put on your last years bonnet and go while the going is good. Having served the country outside of its boundaries, I am supposed to be exempt from further military duties, but that of course is not taken into consideration, when your country wants you and asks you to help.

Remember me to all and trusting the coming year will be a pleasant one and not full of sorrow, I am as always.

Lovingly
William

Morristown. N. J.
Wednesday.

12-6603

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[F5D03E], Letter from William Leslie Edison to Mina Miller (Mrs Thomas A.) Edison, Thomas Alva Edison, 1918

Title
[F5D03E], Letter from William Leslie Edison to Mina Miller (Mrs Thomas A.) Edison, Thomas Alva Edison, 1918

Editor's Notes
Supplied year

Author
Edison, William Leslie

Recipient

- Edison, Mina Miller (Mrs Thomas A.)
- Edison, Thomas Alva

Mentioned
U.S. Army

Date
1918-00-00

Type
Letter

Subject

- Edison-Miller family
- Finances (TAE and family)
- World War I
- Military

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ARMY AND NAVY
YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION
"WITH THE COLORS"

YMCA

My dear Dad + mother -:

I have been working like the very devil since I joined the army and yesterday I received my reward from the Commanding Officer.. as First Class. Top Sergeant mechanic I have been placed in charge of 49 sargents 3 corporals, 94 privates, 10 motor cycles & drivers 3 Trucks & drivers, two repair tanks, two fighting and one supply tank. My work day amounts to about 14 hours. From buck private to the highest non-commisioned officer in a corps that ranks 4 points above any branche of the service. in four weeks is not so bad at that. I have passed every examination offered with flying colors. My next step is a commission which has been assured me on or after arrival in France.

We are all packed and ready for embarkation on the next outgoing transport and we hope to get away

TO THE WRITER: SAVE BY WRITING ON BOTH SIDES OF THIS PAPER
TO THE FOLKS AT HOME: SAVE FOOD, BUY LIBERTY BONDS AND WAR SAVINGS STAMPS

12-6609

the first of the week.[2] We are the 306 Salvage ~~Co~~ Company, every man chosen as to his mechanical ability and experience. To win out in such a bunch is indeed an honor and I was very happy when it was announced that I was top man. I will telegraph you when we leave and I hope some member of the family can find time to say good-bye, as it will be impossible to obtain leave, even the officers themselves

The risks run by the Salvage Corps is greater than any other branche as our work is principly out in "no mans land" and the percentage of hope, in getting back whole, is somewhat less than in other branches of the service.

I got my clothes and wish to thank you for the money you sent for that purpose. If not rubbing it in too hard I would like to have a few A.B.C. checks to carry over with me to England. as money will be a good send, when over there and far away from home. Anything can be mailed here, to 306 Company Camp. Colt, Gettysburg, and no

ARMY AND NAVY
YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION
"WITH THE COLORS"

3

matter where we are a special messenger will be sent right after us to deliver mail and orders.

I may not be able to see you at all if we are ordered to embark at Phila. Balto or Norfolk. If we go to Camp Merritt for a day then all is O.K. but there is no telling what will happen. I am sending a photo of the company with yours truly looking like a bunch of sour grapes. I am enclosing my previous service discharge will you please have it put in a safe place. I never knew it was such a valuable piece of paper, until I reenlisted. I may need it again.

With the chances of seeing you again, very small, I will bid you all good-bye and the best of luck to each and everyone. My serial no is — 3589940 — just that down

TO THE WRITER: SAVE BY WRITING ON BOTH SIDES OF THIS PAPER
TO THE FOLKS AT HOME: SAVE FOOD, BUY LIBERTY BONDS AND WAR SAVINGS STAMPS

12—6609

in a book for future references.
I will write you again before leaving and surely upon arriving in England. We are bound for Harmon, England for a few weeks training and then direct to the firing lines in France. Think of me once in a while and have no worries about my making good or failing in my duties to the flag or country.

Love to all.
Billy

Sunday.
just heard we are off tomorrow but dont know where we embark.

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[F5D03F], Letter from William Leslie Edison to Mina Miller (Mrs Thomas A.) Edison, October 29th, 1919

Title
[F5D03F], Letter from William Leslie Edison to Mina Miller (Mrs Thomas A.) Edison, October 29th, 1919

Author
Edison, William Leslie

Recipient
Edison, Mina Miller (Mrs Thomas A.)

Mentioned

- Travers, Mary Olivia
- Edison, Blanche Travers (Mrs William L.)

Date
1919-10-29

Type
Letter

Subject

- Edison-Miller family
- Deaths and funerals
- World War I
- Property
- Health and medicine

Folder ID
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PHONE 1223-M

HILLTOP
MORRISTOWN, N. J.

My dear Mother -

I have been wanting to run down and see you all, but I will be hanged if Fate is not running alongside of me, jabbing me in the ribs all the time. To cap the climax, Blanche's mother dropped dead two weeks ago and the three mourners are here and the morgue looks like a musical show, along side of this domicile just now.

I have finished the addition to the house and it certainly makes a decidedly, better looking place all around. This gives two additional bed rooms with bath. Am installing hot water heat and look forward to a comfortable winter.

Have nearly completed three new outbuildings so you see I have been quite busy since I returned. Smashed my car up a bit last week so, that also, has to be added to the causalty list. but I am not worrying about anything, any longer. as I finished that course, while over the pond. I saw what worry did to many there and decided to quit, then and there, on the spot.

Will see you as soon as conditions return to normal. Love to all.

Lovingly
Billy. 12-6703

Oct 29th 1919.

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[F5D03G] Letter, 1930-1931

Title
[F5D03G] Letter, 1930-1931

Author
Edison, Blanche Travers (Mrs William L.)

Recipient
Edison, Mina Miller (Mrs Thomas A.)

Mentioned

- Miller, Grace A
- Miller, Mary Emily
- Firestone, Harvey Samuel
- Nichols, William Wallace
- Edison, Thomas Alva

Date
1930-1931

Type
Letter

Subject

- Edison-Miller family
- TAE friends and associates
- Health and medicine

Folder ID
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Aunt Mary - Father smiled
thro-ghout the conduct
of his Marriage Service
thro- My Freedom
bored a good-by e-
bibly the recovery of
your Uncle Langdon
Farewell - We are
still feeling very happy

Darling Mother -
Just a vole-
y say how very
thrilled we were
y hear seen yr
all - wished I
could hear engaged
yr Uncle Will and

was glad to hear news
Aunt Mary and Uncle Will
& love your family - they
have always seemed
very near to me - Hope
dear Aunt Grace gets
to Florida - Lyn to &
will be very hard for
a long time - This is an-
other good-bye - Much
happiness - perfect health -
and lots of love from
your devoted
Blanche